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DART TEAM GETS PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION AGAINST ANOTHER SAN DIEGO MOTEL

Owners of La Cresta Motel Ordered to Take Steps to Stop Illegal Activity on Motel Premises

San Diego, CA (January 13, 1999) -- Tomorrow (January 14, 1999) at 9:30 in the morning, San Diego police officers will post drug abatement signs at a local motel. The signs are going up by court order, after a San Diego Superior Court judge granted a preliminary injunction against the motel owners and operators. The La Cresta Motel at 4980 El Cajon Boulevard has been the target of an undercover investigation by San Diego Police officers for several months for illegal drug activity and acts of prostitution occurring on the motel premises. From June 1998 to September 1998, police made numerous arrests at the motel for narcotics violations and contacts for prostitution activity.

In a civil complaint, the City of San Diego alleges that the motel manager and owner actively encouraged the prostitution and drug activity to flourish on the property. The City alleges that undercover police video documents the motel manager taking cuts from an undercover officer, posing as a prostitute, and it documents the owner's knowledge of the illegal activity occurring on the property. Under California law, property owners may be held civilly responsible for illegal activities conducted on their premises.

Last October, the City's Drug Abatement Response Team (DART) obtained a temporary restraining order against the owners of the La Cresta Motel, requiring them to take immediate action to abate illegal activities on the motel's premises. Superior Court Judge Raymond F. Zvetina has now strengthened his order by signing the preliminary injunction. This injunction orders the defendants to not rent rooms to known or identified prostitutes, pimps, and drug dealers and users, and requires the defendants to hire security to patrol the premises.

This case is the most recent major abatement case filed by DART to address prostitution and drug activity at local motels. In June 1998, DART filed an action against another motel along El Cajon Boulevard, the Travel Time Motel, to abate drug and prostitution activity on its property. DART is composed of two deputy city attorneys, San Diego Police personnel, and investigators from Neighborhood Code Compliance.

"Our drug and prostitution abatement deputies are working in partnership with the San Diego Police Department, Neighborhood Code Compliance, and the community," said City Attorney Casey Gwinn. "DART is committed to helping community members stop the prostitution, drug activities, and other illegal conduct occurring in San Diego's neighborhoods." The City calls on the Hotel/Motel Association to join in the ongoing efforts to solve this problem.

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